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ABSTRACT

This document presents guidelines to help school personnel design efficient administration day care services for young children and their families. Topics discussed include day care philosophy, historical perspective, and rationale; some basic program planning and procedure suggestions; coordination of day care and public school programs; staff selection criteria and staffing patterns; parental involvement; a day care program for 3- to 5-year olds; day care and before-and-after school programs for 5- to 14-year olds; and community involvement. (SET)

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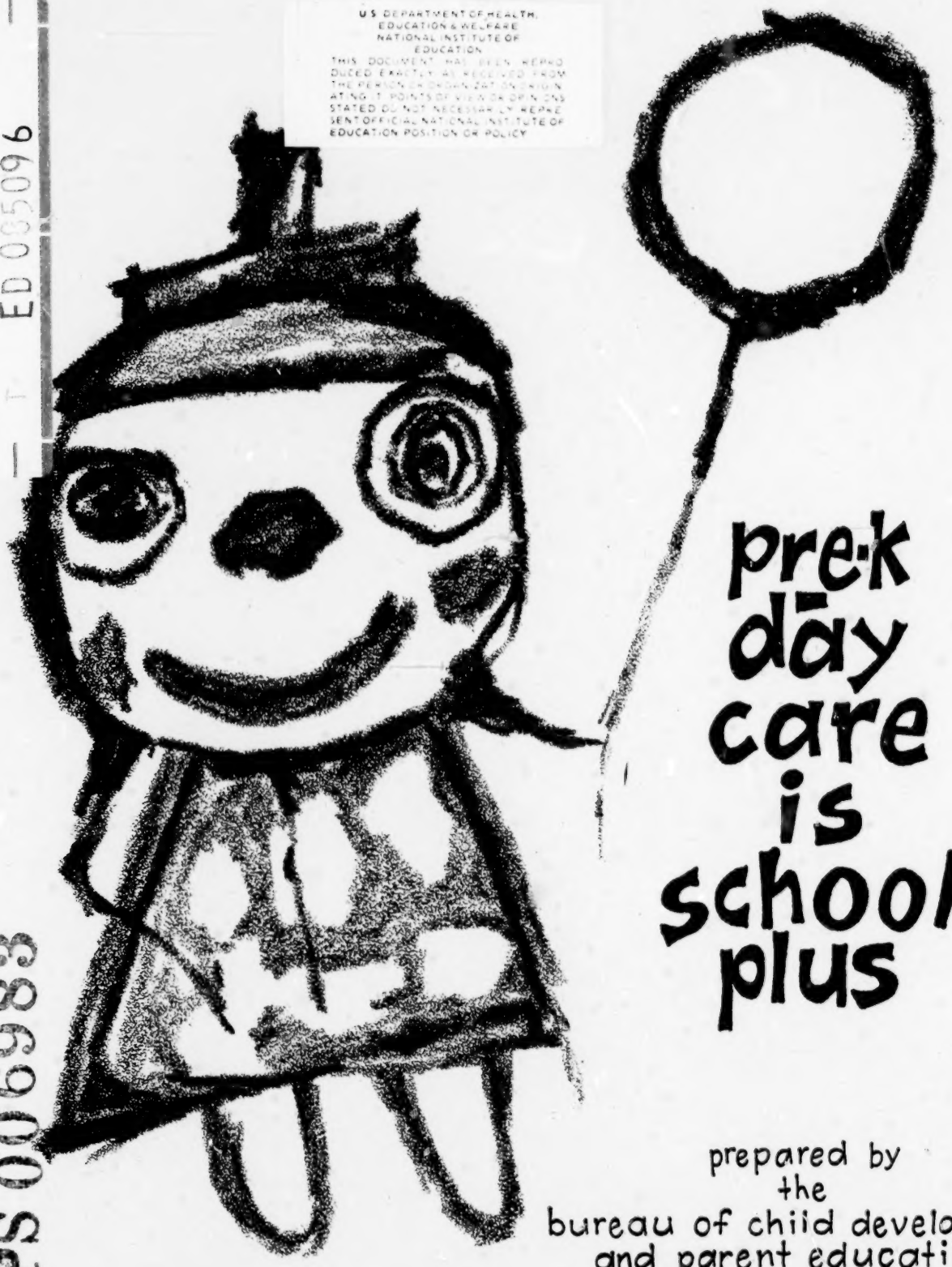

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DAY CARE

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PREFACE

These guidelines have been prepared to assist in the formation and ongoing development of day care services to be offered by local school districts and BOCES in New York State. Some communities may refer to their programs as child development centers, parent-child, or family centers.

Specifically, the purpose of this document is to communicate those day care principles and practices which may help school personnel to use their prior experience and skill in providing services, which, though new to most school settings, are compatible with their goals and similar to current practice. It is assumed that the numerous resources on day care, including available literature, will be used in conjunction with this material. However, this document offers considerable information not easily found elsewhere. It may serve not only as needed supplementary assistance to school personnel, but as a foundation for others who will need to acquire additional understanding and skills before proceeding with the operation of day care services.

The basis of selectivity in terms of aspects presented and degree of emphasis stems in part from recognition of available expertise in some areas. Omission of detailed consideration of administrative practice is not an indication of unimportance but conviction that its inclusion is not necessary in a relatively brief statement of guidelines addressed to school personnel. Other decisions relating to inclusions and emphasis are based on experience-developed assumptions about what guidelines are most likely to produce balanced, comprehensive, efficiently administered programs of personalized day care services for young children and their families.

These guidelines are part of a collection of materials prepared for use by public schools in establishing and maintaining day care programs. In addition to these guidelines the collection will include a bibliography, State interagency guidelines detailing application procedures, and other material which will be prepared as need arises.

William L. Bitner III
Associate Commissioner for
Instructional Services

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introduction

- philosophical base
- historical perspective
- rationale for day care in public schools

A. Philosophical Base

Day care is a service to supplement parents' care of children when home and other social institution do not meet the family's need for such care during part or all of the day. The purpose of supplementing rather than replacing parental responsibility is a basic factor in determining the amount of time a child will spend in a day care program. The child's stage of development and his special needs determine the kind of service to be provided. Selection should be made from a wide range of options including family day care, group day care, and care for specialized need.

Family day care provides a family style setting and program. A child's experience is intimate and his activities include home and community living, with or without the presence of other children of a family-like number and age distribution, perhaps including his own siblings. The home may be a real one or it may be a pseudo-home established for the purpose of providing day care in a home-style atmosphere. Care of this type is usually the most suitable form of service for babies and toddlers and may be the preferred kind of care for a child of any age because of particular need or as a desirable alternative to available group programs.

When the child's stage of development and individual characteristics indicate that group life would be a positive experience, group day care is likely to be the most appropriate kind of service to select. For young children, the service will incorporate a school experience during the hours of his attendance. For older children, the day care service will supplement the school program but will not incorporate it, lest the children be socially isolated from those who do not need day care.

Any group day care program should include children with many specialized needs. It can be a positive experience for all children to become acquainted with others with varying needs, including handicaps. The salient factor in determining a special child's inclusion in a day care program is the degree to which he can contribute to and profit from the experience.

The philosophical approach of a day care program should demonstrate awareness of and responsibility for three major areas of growth and learning. These are:

-The routines of care, which are highly individual and have great emotional and motivational significance. These aspects of nurture include feeding, dressing, management of elimination, personal hygiene, resting, and sleeping.

-The management of the environment and the child's participation in it. The practical aspects of housekeeping, shopping, patterns of living together and coping with the minutiae of daily existence form a major aspect of the child's development. Together, with the routines, these experiences are the learning ground for much of the child's knowledge, the testing ground for much of his theoretical learning.

-Work - play experiences. These are often considered the only, or at least, the major educational aspects of the children's program. They are exceedingly important and require careful planning and sensitive selection of equipment, materials, and learning opportunities. However, this planning must deal with these experiences as part of, not scheduled separately from, the other aspects of the program.

All three aspects are integral parts of the total learning environment.

The parent should be able to select from services which supplement family care in an enriched, carefully planned environment; assist them in carrying out their responsibilities without supplanting them; and supplement the community's existing resources and point out the need for additional ones. All of this should be provided on the basis of caring for each child in a program well suited to his optimal development.

B. Historical Perspective

Day care is most often available in a community as a separate service under proprietary, voluntary, or governmental auspices. It has been one of multiple services funded by the government or local community or an adjunct to an industry. More recently, it has become possible to have day care funded under the Social Security Act and operated by public schools.

Twice in the history of the U.S. there have been extensive programs under public school auspices: during the days of the Works Progress Administration to provide jobs during the Great Depression and under the Lanham Act to make women available for industries related to World War II. Now no longer a poor relative of welfare and defense agencies, the need for day care is being supported by labor, industry, women's liberation enthusiasts, and middle class parents who want this experience for their children. Only a few school districts, however, have established and maintained day care programs. Although there is considerable precedence for school systems' operation of day care services, there has been little direct experience on the part of most school systems and school administrators.

C. Day Care in Public Schools

When a school moves into the longer day care needed by some children, it is very likely to think in terms either of extending the time or supplementing school hours with custodial care at the beginning and end of the schoolday. This is a common and understandable error which illustrates the need for reorientation and reeducation of even the most skillful school personnel.

Whenever any child needs to be cared for outside his home for longer periods of time than those composing a good child development program and whenever the hours of care encroach upon the time which might be desirable for a child to spend within his own family setting, the differences from part-time schooling are more than the amount of time. Moreover, a day care program must avoid estrangement of the child from his family through interference with or unresolved confusion of values, patterns of family life, and the opportunity for experiences in intimacy. Suitable support for existing family patterns must be provided, and conscious planning must insure that such elements are really present to a sufficient degree. Families need support in development of parental skills and avoidance of separation problems and alienation which might be caused by the day care experience.

For children in prekindergarten classes, nothing will be omitted when the transition is made to a day care program -- although there will be changes and additions. Careful planning in the transition may create an awareness of some deficiencies in the existing programs as well as develop understanding of implications of day care service.

Program improvement and extension helps bring parents peace of mind in the knowledge that their children are having good care in a well balanced program. Participation by parents may be different because of the long hours of day care services, but sensitive and creative planning by staff can result in meaningful involvement.

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Using the knowledge and skills developed in other programs for young children, the staff will plan programs and procedures which take the following factors into consideration:

Fatigue

Fatigue is a factor of very real significance to almost everyone in the program, particularly the children and the parents.

Provisions to minimize the effects of the child's fatigue may include:

-a carefully balanced day, with opportunity for solitary play, play with only one other child, and play in a group;

-shortening the child's day when feasible; and

-protecting the child in the late afternoon from events and situations which add to fatigue and irritability.

The mother's fatigue stems from the double task of homemaking and whatever creates her need for day care.

The staff can help by:

-assisting the parent in the process of leaving or calling for the child

-accepting the mother or father as an individual

-demonstrating concern for the parent by providing a time for refreshment and conversation in an unhurried atmosphere

-relieving the parent of pressure for immediate food preparation by informing him of provision of a late snack.

Supervision and relationship needs

Children need continuity in personnel. Schedules must be so arranged that there is sufficient overlap of adults familiar to the children.

-The adult in charge at the beginning and end of the day must be one who is mature and responsible enough to make contact with parents. The teacher in charge of the group should be present at one of those times.

-The utilization of multiple staff members on staggered shifts necessitates carefully planned methods of communication among them, so that all are consistently aware of any information or plan and can pass on any new information.

Safety

Children are in no more danger when they attend day care programs for long periods of time than when attending for short periods if the program is properly planned. However, a day care staff must make specific arrangements to assure that all safety precautions are available beyond the usual school hours. While one child remains, there must be accessibility to telephones, medical records, evacuation plans, etc.

Health and illness

A good school health program is a start for a health program in a related day care service, but there are two aspects to be carefully considered and especially planned for in the health program of a day care service:

1. commitment to comprehensive health care to assure the provision of diagnostic care, treatment, and preventive health education

2. provision of additional resources and personnel to facilitate sharing of responsibility with the parents

Differences will reveal themselves in such situations as the following:

A child becoming ill during the day may not be so readily returned to his home by sending for the parent. The parent may be unable to maintain employment in the face of frequent work interruption for instances of relatively inconsequential illness. Provision for observing deviations from normal conditions will necessitate some supportive care of the child separated from other children.

A child who is slightly ill, if not contagious, may attend the program for all or part of the day. Planning for the supervision of a child receiving such individualized care should be worked out individually with the parents. Principles of health, safety, and sanitation should be observed, along with the child's need to feel cared for, but the particular method of care is one for each program to devise.

Giving of medication in the long-hours program may be necessary more frequently than in the shorter, regular school program. Using the usual good practices of requiring the child's physician to file the order with instructions, the provisions of absolute safety in storing the medication out of any child's reach, and serving it exactly as specified and only by a responsible person, this service becomes perfectly manageable. It cannot be overemphasized that there must be no exceptions to proper procedures in handling this aspect of a child's care.

Immunizations are required for admission to the program, but complete coverage in advance may create situations of delay that pose real problems for the family. Sympathy and referral service may help some families to accept the delay or to find alternate methods of care temporarily.

Programing specifics relating to a longer day for the child

Public school districts have had rich experience in operating programs in after-school hours for extra study and recreational involvement of students in the areas of sports, music, dramatic, or other interests. Much of this know-how can be easily incorporated into the day care program. Reference here is made only to those aspects of the program needing consideration beyond those with which school people are familiar as they plan longer day care programs.

Independence and self-direction

This does not mean independence of a precocious kind, but development of the ability for self-help and age-appropriate competence under the guidance of an observant and supportive adult. If a high degree of teacher control - too often characteristic of public school programs - is maintained throughout a longer day, it increases undesirable effects such as extreme dependence and lack of initiative or deep resentment of excessive control.

Competence

While it is true that a good school program contributes constructively to a child's development of skill and competence, it must be recognized that part-day programs do not encompass the range and kind of activities in which a child might participate during the course of a day in a good home and community environment. The safety and procection of the day care center can have the effect of incarceration and isolation from the reality of the world for which a child is increasingly ready.

Ability to play and work alone and with others

Most part-day programs are organized into groups of children of very narrow age span. The long day care program with same age mates does not provide the child with the opportunity for sufficient interaction with children of widely different ages. Further, his absence from his neighborhood may interfere with his acquaintance with the children of varied ages in his own neighborhood. These are serious, but by no means insurmountable, problems.

A good program makes provisions for a child to play and work alone or with one other child to lessen the danger of failure to develop his capacity for being alone, to develop personal interests, and to develop and maintain meaningful close relationships. The potential hazard of constant group experience can be obviated by careful use of space and staff to avoid fatigue and overstimulation.

Regression

Children in organized groups under adult leadership are often under pressure to perform at a high level expressed as self-control, learning, or "good" behavior. Adult expectation which is reasonable, supportive, and stimulating can help to alleviate this.

In the long day care program, a child may be unable to sustain his expected or intended standard of behavior and may regress to an earlier stage. This very normal behavior is not always understood by adults more accustomed to the "better" parts of the day, nor is it always acceptable to the child himself.

Planning so that regression is not precipitated by the program itself and when exhibited is skillfully handled must be done in a conscious way.

Physical care and nurture

Any good program will provide for children's needs during the period of attendance. Long hours away from home bring the need for more food, more rest, more activity. However, it cannot be taken for granted that providing "more of the same" is providing in the best way.

Adequate outdoor play is even more crucial in a day care program than in programs of shorter duration, since it will frequently be too late for young children to play outdoors when they return home.

Each young child in the program should have the opportunity to rest or sleep in a comfortable and secluded spot. For older children, facilities for sprawling or curling up in a relaxed fashion are more appropriate.

A child's right to self-management for toileting and personal hygiene needs to be taken into consideration, and his ability to exercise that right encouraged.

Since the school is acting as parent in absentia for a long part of the child's day, staff will need to be increasingly aware of needed program adjustment for individual children. The most carefully developed plans must remain flexible.

administration

- coordinating day care and public school programs

▲ staff

selection criteria
staffing patterns

If children who attend day care before or after school hours are added to an established group of children, careful attention must be given to preserve the identity of the original group. Large groups of children added to established groups may violate the carefully planned feeling of belonging and must be avoided. Problems of hurt feelings caused by some children leaving earlier than others can be dealt with by sympathetic staff, but problems caused by adding a group in the afternoon cannot be solved in a way to provide equally good programs for both groups.

-For the child in kindergarten, careful consideration should be given to integrating the school curriculum into the day care program in recognition of the expenditure of energy demanded for a child to adjust to different groups and settings.

A. Day Care in Relation to the Regular School Program

Introducing a day care program into the familiar school operation raises all the questions and requires all the decisions of any day care program planning, plus considerations of relating the two programs. Simply operating a day care service under school auspices with no contact between the two parts, would be ignoring an opportunity in a way which would amount to gross neglect. The interaction of two subprograms within any social unit intensifies differences of opinion and intrusion of feelings, but recognition of such differences is the first step in resolution with emphasis on overall purpose rather than on the management system. Day care can be effectively integrated into the existing school program and must be done in a way most appropriate for each local school system.

-The older child needs a program structure which is separate from his classroom where all too frequently there is considerable focus on physical inactivity, task commitment, and drill. He needs a program which will allow him freedom, opportunity, and responsibility within a format as similar as possible to the home setting, even while providing the advantages of organized and planned activities. Experience has shown that the older child does better when assigned to a day care group using a room other than his own classroom. This not only meets his need for refreshment through a change of setting and activities, but also minimizes the childs' feelings about the expectations in his classroom.

Staff relationships and communications

Effective coordination of all aspects of the school's responsibility is a major focus of the administrative task. Comprehensive goals can be met only if the three units - home, school, and its extension into day care servive - understand each other and find ways of working together to support the child and family.

Much of the benefit of good coordination lies less in solving identified difficulties in relationships than in bringing about positive integration. However, achievement of that integration cannot be taken for granted. The suspicion, jealousy, or misunderstanding which sometimes characterizes parent-teacher relationships can turn into a triangle of misunderstanding or separation involving day care personnel unless real attention is paid to the importance of shared, not competitive, responsibility. Establishment of procedures and conscious attention to relationships among the concerned adults can do much to achieve this. Formal and informal meetings and conferences, regular supervision and consultation, and ready availability of administrative personnel are all helpful.

Curriculum relationships between school program and day care

Where children are attending two separate groups under the school auspices, a sufficient degree of awareness of sharing of the two plans is essential. This is not to say that they need to be developed as a unified whole. But the day care program should provide the opportunity for the child to capitalize on his developing interests and skills. Such opportunity should not take the form of drill or supervised homework. When such help is needed by a child, very careful attention should be given by both parents and day care staff to arrive at some sensible arrangement which will recognize the child's need for rest, recreation, and relaxation.

When the day care teacher is aware of the children's classroom activities and interests, materials and activities which encourage functional use of emerging interests can be provided. Both programs will be enriched and the child's learning experiences enhanced.

Sharing school building and classroom space

Where it is not possible to have separate rooms in the school for school and day care programs, active cooperation, reasoning attitudes, and good communications are necessary to insure a minimum of tension. Some suggestions for accomplishing this intent:

1. Rooms chosen for day care use should be the lightest, especially in winter months; the largest without sacrificing a sense of intimacy; the most easily rearranged; the most accessible to outdoor play space; and the best for existing or improvised storage resources. Rooms offering good possibilities are frequently kindergartens, home economics rooms, playrooms, or multipurpose rooms. But several ordinary classrooms used as a cluster may be adequate.

2. Dual storage and display must be carefully worked out for harmonious living by both sets of users. Some separate spaces are essential for storing work in progress and for certain separate materials. Whatever can be shared should not be duplicated but used jointly with agreed-upon standards of care. The good citizenship practices involved in leaving the room ready for the next group's use are good experiences for all concerned. Of course, certain equipment and procedures will facilitate management and housekeeping tasks; possibilities include casters under movable shelves which are hinged to fold closed or which can be turned to face the wall and provide display space, large standing screens which can be reversed and cover alternate wall space, sets of stacking chairs which can be stored in a closet, etc.

Of course, the best equipment and procedures cannot overcome all disadvantages of sharing space. An example is the problem created by leaving up block structures, occupying floor space, and immobilizing desirable equipment needed by the alternate group. Children, if made aware of the situation, may have a significant role in dealing with the problem and should have a regular responsibility for reorganizing the room.

-Cleaning and housekeeping duties suitable for the children's chores should be part of the arrangement.

-Professional maintenance staff should be sufficient to do what is necessary to make the room thoroughly ready for the next group.

-Frank and swift communication between the two staffs will help to keep the development of irritation to a minimum.

School vacation periods permit full-time day care use and become very welcome to day care children and staff.

B. Standards

Standards for school programs in regard to health, safety, sanitation, and size of indoor and outdoor spaces have been established by the Division of Educational Facilities Planning of the State Education Department. Administrative school personnel are well acquainted with the requirements and procedures. The State Department of Social Services has a code of rules and regulations which is commensurate with those of the State Education Department.

The same basic equipment needed for any good program for 3-5 year olds will be needed to equip a day care program. The longer day, however, will demand some careful consideration for simulating the home environment by including some:

-living room furniture, such as overstuffed furniture, rugs, rocking chair, etc., to provide homelike atmosphere;

-kitchen equipment, such as pots, pans, toaster, blender, etc., to provide homelike experiences;

-garage or basement type equipment, such as simple tools, machines to take apart and put together, to provide opportunities for exploration and lifelike dramatic play;

-machinery used in the home, such as vacuum cleaner, washer, dryer, typewriter, etc., to provide opportunity for homelike duties.

These items will vary as staff become acquainted with children and begin to capitalize on their particular interests, but providing such opportunities is an essential consideration of a good day care program.

Day care staff is selected in relation to a plan for organization and distribution of personnel, whether or not the particular assignment is determined at the point of selection. In developing that plan, the administering agency considers the program's purpose, size, ages of children served, its basic policies and the requirements of relevant State and Federal regulations. Appropriate persons will be involved in the development of policies and procedures underlying staff selection. Effective administration will provide for delineation of responsibility to administrators and committees in several stages: decisions made by the school board; decisions made by or with help of advisory board; decisions which are delegated in accordance with agreed upon policy; decisions made by the director in regard to operation of the program. The size and scope of the projected day care program will determine the complexity of organization. Even the smallest program requires a clear line of policy and essential machinery for implementation, although the program is incorporated in existing school policy and procedure.

The size of the day care program, as well as other factors, may have considerable effect on the possible practices of engaging staff to serve in both regular school classes and day care services, and policy must be developed to enable such combined assignment to be carried out in clearly understood and efficient ways.

It is easy to fall into the common error of engaging staff primarily for one assignment without regard to the suitability for a second. Some skills pertinent to one situation are less important in the other. However, certain essential attitudes and abilities are needed for any assignments related to work with children and families. When staff is being selected for one of the programs by an administrator who has more familiarity and expertise in one aspect or discipline than the other there may be danger of giving wrong weight to certain characteristics and skills; For example, a classroom teacher highly regarded as successful because of pertinent classroom skills may be employed for day care when, in fact, her strengths are more appropriate to a structured program.

Some able classroom teachers do not perceive the concept of day care and tend to "babysit." They fail to apply their available skill and knowledge because of their attitude toward the service. Others fail to make the proper distinction between activities and methods suitable for school classroom and for day care. Where the lack is merely one of orientation, the inservice training and supervision will take care of that lack. But where there is a problem of attitudes and values, where knowledge of the difference is not synonymous with acceptance of it, the administrative task is to recognize the person's unsuitability.

Anyone in contact with the children - including part-time workers and those with specialized assignments, such as cook, janitor, secretary, should respect the day care program, get along well with children in an informal situation, and have the maturity and flexibility to work as a member of a team. In addition, the particular position should determine the need for specific abilities. The lack of skills in the elements of a program for children are not compensated for by the presence of an otherwise appropriate personality. Program skills can be taught more easily than attitudes can be changed. Where adequate training and intensive supervisory resources are at hand, a program-deficient but otherwise excellent candidate may be considered as a potential staff member.

When the program is for a large number of children with a wide geographical distribution and related to several different schools, the tasks and staffing patterns are different from what is needed for a few groups of children in one school. Operating within a school system implies the built-in, already operating availability of resources for all major responsibilities of management. The size and scope of the day care program will determine the degree to which it must have its own resources for management. The smallest program will have to develop and maintain comprehensive procedures for relating to the school and the system.

The administrative director is the first staff member to be selected. His qualifications and responsibilities will be determined by the size and scope of the program and by its relationship to the rest of the system. He may be a full-time administrator districtwide, the school principal, or a teacher of a day care group.

The program director carries responsibility for the development and supervision of the program. In a small program, this position may be combined with that of the administrative director. However, the skills are different and, whether the positions are held by one person or more, both sets of skills must be present and the two aspects of the program should blend into one well-balanced and consistent whole.

A unit head of each local program should be designated if this is not synonymous with the director's position. He serves as local administrator under supervision of an area-wide director or as the senior staff member responsible when the regular assignee is not available to act as director. In addition to having good judgment and ability to work well with other adults, he must become knowledgeable about policies, procedures, and local resources. The size of the program will be the main determinant in the position's being classified as full-time, part-time, or deputy on call from a teaching or other position; i.e., social worker, nurse, etc. The job description will specify the nature of the particular position which may range from a major administrative task to the smallest deputy responsibility.

Group staff should be sufficient to serve each group as indicated in the preceding section. The title, job descriptions, and organization plan should clearly describe specific lines of relative and interrelated responsibility. Good teamwork and democratic interchange require a respon-

sible person in charge of the group. Since this "person" is likely to be two, because of the shifts, it should be clear who is the leader and who the deputy or associate. Such specificity of expectation is essential if the group team is not to succomb to the frequent malady among day care programs: a lack of unity and overall responsibility for the children's daily program and for each child's development in it. Careful structuring of responsibility facilitates cooperation and creative interchange among staff and may help to prevent the build-up of resentment, indifference, or other harmful attitudes.

There will be other specialists on or available to the day care staff, some or all of them serving on the staff of the regular school program. These will include professional specialists; i.e., doctor, nurse, nutritionist, social worker, parent counselor, guidance counselor, and related health, social service and community aides - and maintenance specialists; i.e., building superintendent, custodian, cook, housekeeper, etc., also with possible related aides. Day care duties and relationships should be specified in their job descriptions.

Supervisory and inservice training specialists may be part of the regular school staff or may be entirely within the day care administration, depending upon where the specialized skills can be found. There responsibility should be clear within a plan implemented for continuous development and improvement both of individual staff and of the program as a whole.

In addition to the paid and regular staff members, there can be - indeed, hopefully will be - volunteers, students, and parents, who will be incorporated into the program for mutual benefit. Criteria for their acceptance must be developed as carefully as for the regular staff, and lines of responsibility as carefully drawn. The job description will be different from that of the regular staff in most cases, but it should exist and should be clearly understood.

Qualifications

Qualifications of personality and skill implied by the job description as well as by the specified state regulations should be explicit, stated in terms of the characteristics sought.

There is little standardized or conventional training for day care, but all relevant professions are tapped, their standards adopted for qualification purposes. Well-developed qualifying practice for para-professionals is in the process of becoming standardized by the respective professionals.

The lack of specifically drawn day care qualifications is no indication that such qualifications are irrelevant or unimportant. It is rather an indication that full professional qualifications are to be applied where these skills are appropriate, as in the health field, and that recognized standards of excellent practice, not yet codified into professional measurements of qualification, are to be used in those areas for which there are no such existing definitions.

One problem for the day care field is intensified by its administration under a school system. This is the difficulty of finding training in education that is appropriate for the day care program. Many teachers have had to develop their own training or seek help in adapting their professional knowledge of education in the classroom to the group program of day care. Training for nursery school, early childhood education, or child development is very relevant - but not enough. Even degree holders in these fields may lack sufficiently relevant practical experience and integrative theoretical training to provide the "plus" of day care.

Few elementary school trained teachers have formal preparation as relevant for day care as that of the early childhood trainees. More and more college education courses are providing built-in relevance to day care, but inservice education is still the major factor in helping staff to make a proper day care application of principles learned under academic auspices.

Child development, human growth, sociology, and psychology are all relevant to day care operation but their academic presentation does not always help the day care student to make appropriate application to the actual operating program unless there is strong leadership within the operation itself. The college faculty faced with day care students is frequently inexperienced even though willing to make studious and creative efforts to develop hypothetical and theoretical adaptations to it. Theoretical and scientific ideas are as valid for day care as for schools or any other institutions, but the trainer may make assumptions about the application which are not valid because of reliance on stereotyped ideas about what day care is and what it is trying to accomplish. Combining this kind of misunderstanding with a misapplication of specific skill training - in physical education, arts, crafts, recreation, etc., tends to produce leaders who think of themselves as school teachers or playground directors or recreation leaders or therapists working in a day care setting, instead of leaders applying these skills to a day care program.

The difficulty in finding high quality training for day care, and attitudes of low regard for day care as compared with teaching have led to a tendency to be satisfied with unskilled workers. Those eminently suited by personality and attitude may prove highly suitable especially when combined with professional leadership which is responsible for onsite inservice education.

An important factor in selecting staff for the day care program is recognition of qualifications which, while considerably more difficult to evaluate in advance than are records of training and of achievement, are no less essential. They include:

- -warmth and acceptance in relation to children, certainly, and to other adults, notably parents and colleagues
- -ability and willingness to grow and change - and to accept supervision and training as part of the method of doing so
- -interest in, acceptance of, and respect for children as people and as individuals, with confidence in their capacity for growth and change
- -acceptance of responsibility for an important task and a recognition that day care is just that

Job description and personnel policies

Job descriptions should be carefully developed - and as carefully changed from time to time. Each staff member should have a copy of his job description which should serve as a basis for his evaluation in the designated position. When one person holds two positions, requiring placement in the school classroom program and in the day care program, this should be clearly reflected in the job description or descriptions provided. While job descriptions and tables of relative responsibility should be clear, their specificity should not interfere with the development of varied styles among individuals and worker teams.

Personnel policies should be carefully developed and a copy should be in the hands of each staff member. Where some regular school policies may be omitted or changed in their application to the day care personnel, such understanding must be clearly presented either by a separately developed statement or by a statement that describes the deviation from the basic school policy. Procedures for working within the policy should be clear to the staff, as well as provision for participating in its development and for helping to make changes. Volunteers should be aware of the policies as they apply to them.

Both day care staff and other staff should participate in all-school programs and policy development.

Staff patterns

Since the quality and competence of the staff are the most crucial factors in the success of any program, setting up a staffing pattern which is right for children and staff should be given serious consideration. These patterns will vary from center to center since many factors determine the need.

Staffing requirements will be determined on the basis of services or functions to be performed rather than in terms of specific individuals needed. The services mandate consideration of the following personnel:

-director responsible for overall coordination

-a social worker for program serving 150 children

-a school nurse-teacher for program serving 150 children or more

-an early childhood coordinator for program serving 150 children or more

-master teacher to supervise every four to five units of children if qualified teachers are not employed for each classroom

-teacher and teacher assistant or aide for every 15-18 children each 5- to 6-hour day

-appropriate paraprofessional supportive staff to fulfill needs in social service and health components dependent on the number of families served

-consultative services of psychologist, nutritionist, doctor, and other specialist as needed

-staff member responsible for on-going inservice and for career ladder plans of both professional and paraprofessional staff

-staff member responsible for working with parents and involving the total community

Smaller programs will need to look for potential staff members with special skills which will permit them to double in brass in order to provide the mandated services. Competent professional leadership in each discipline will not only insure a first rate program for children and families, but will also provide opportunity for built-in inservice program for the staff.

Obviously, the size of the staff in any one center will depend upon the ages of children, the number of hours a center is open, the number of classrooms and their physical location, the ability of staff to perform more than one function, and the kinds of ancillary services readily available to the program from the school district itself or other community agencies.

Classrooms should be staffed with these considerations in mind:

-There must be two adults available for each room at all times. This may necessitate the use of ancillary staff in order to provide this coverage.

-The younger the children, the higher the adult-child ratio should be.

-Overlapping of staff time will provide opportunity for inservice training, team planning, and conferences with staff and parents.

-Careful assignment of specific children to specific staff members will provide opportunity to build deeper interpersonal relationships and prevent the possibility of having any one child overlooked.

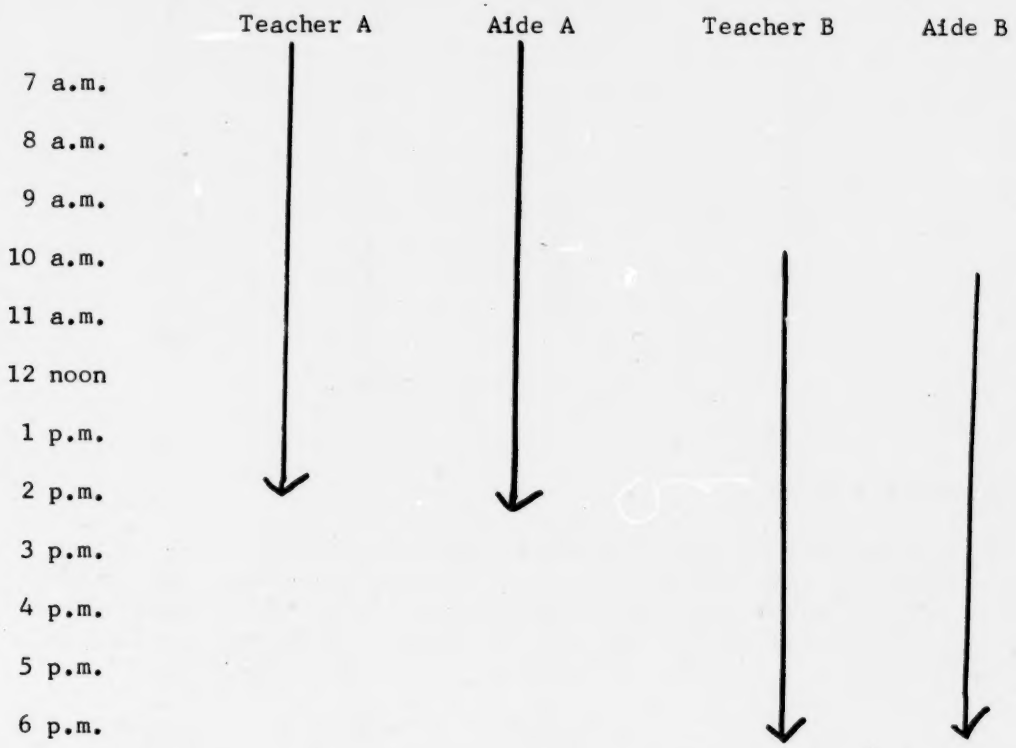
-Staff must be guarded from overfatigue. Free time for staff is needed to allow for recordkeeping, conferences, planning, and much needed breaks in order to preserve the good humor and alertness which disappear as fatigue sets in.

Given these basic principles, variations of staffing patterns are endless. Consideration of a wide range of choices and a constant evaluation of how well the schedule suits the needs of families, children, and staff will further refine the basic schedule.

Generally speaking, there are three basic patterns to staff classrooms which operate long hours. These can be juggled, combined, or manipulated to produce a tailormade schedule for a specific program.

1. The double staff pattern

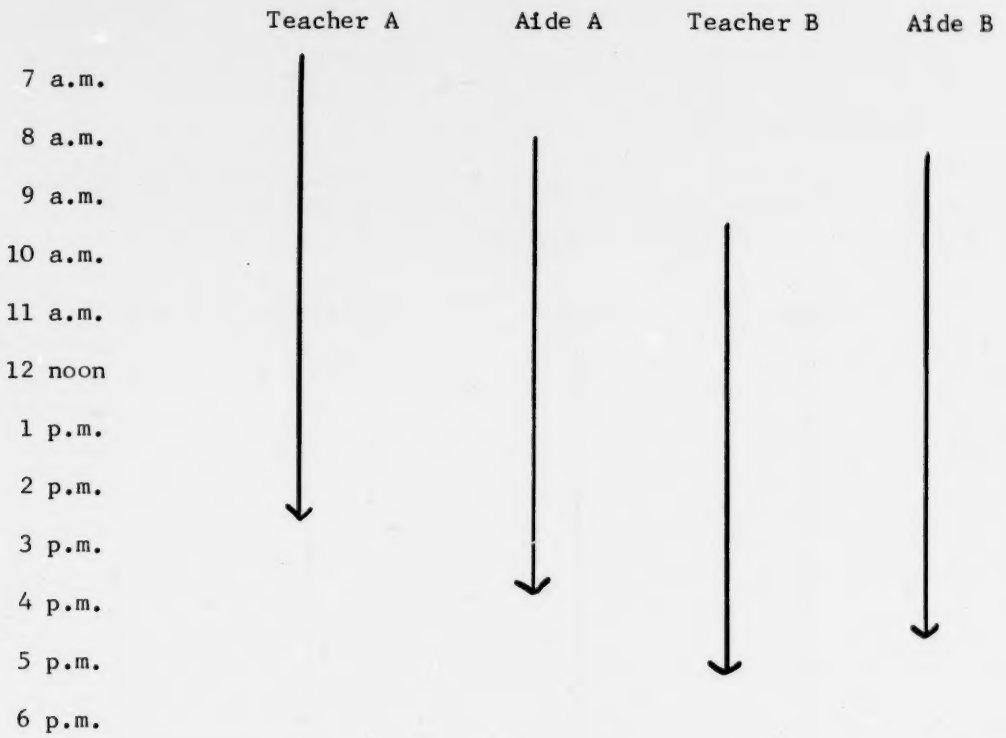
This plan provides for two sets of full-time classroom staff which overlap during the midday shift to provide easy transition and opportunity for sharing and inservice education.



Ancillary staff are scheduled when the number of children is at its peak, taking turns to cover the lighter hours.

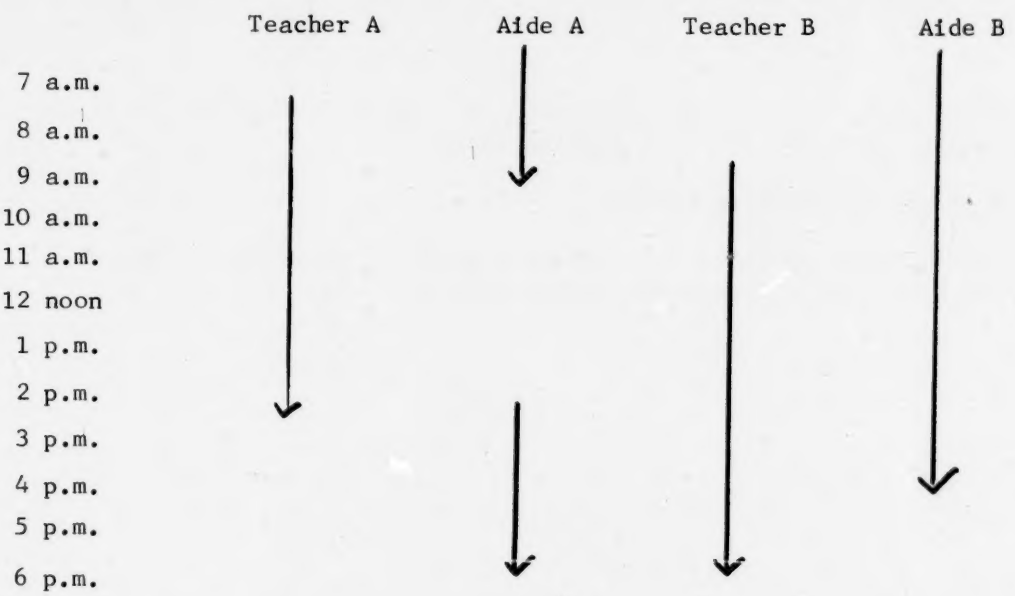
2. The staggered staffing pattern

This pattern provides for classroom staff to arrive and leave at different hours and the necessary overlap is built in.



3. The divided schedule

It is sometimes necessary to employ part-time staff to fill in the early morning and late afternoon hours. Like all schedules, the divided schedule has its advantages and disadvantages. It provides opportunity for young college and mature high school students to become involved in meaningful ways, but it fails to provide the needed overlap time.



It is preferable to have the same person staff the early hours and return for late afternoon. This may not always be possible.

This plan requires careful consideration of inclusion of the part-time staff members in inservice activities and conferences.

Whatever staffing variation is chosen, it must:

-provide a limited number of staff on a continuous basis to maintain consistency and intimacy;

-provide flexibility within the adequate coverage;

-team up staff members to cover each group, mindful of the strengths of each, but also of the needs of inexperienced young staff members and physical limitations of some older staff members;

-prepare a study of children's patterns of arrival and leaving in order to determine the needed number of adults at all times; and

-prepare a schedule for nonclassroom staff to support classroom staff during hours they may be needed.

The deciding factor in developing any staffing pattern is the availability of appropriate personnel to make every day a good day for children.

C. Records

Public school districts have had extensive experience in record-keeping necessary for program management and documentation of information on each child, such as name, address, and place of employment of parent or guardian; person to be notified in case of emergency; persons to whom child may be released at end of schoolday; permission slips to allow staff to take child outside the building; and procedures for recording attendance and reasons for absence.

Extensive health forms have also been developed including a child's vital statistics: reports of physical and dental examinations; notification of parents in regard to needed treatment; permission to call a doctor in case of emergency, etc. School nurse-teachers are well aware of regulations which prohibit giving medication except upon written notice of a physician and the importance of keeping the written permission on file.

One value of having a day care program coordinated within a public school is that these official records will not need to be duplicated. The need for their being current and accurate is even more crucial in a day care program because of increased responsibility to assure delivery of services to families.

This does not mean that the school will assume the responsibility for taking the child to the dentist or doctor. Neither does it mean that responsibility ends with notifying parents of the need. The social service and health staffs have a serious responsibility to follow through on any needed treatment or resolution to a specific problem by providing supportive services and actively involving the family until the family can take over the responsibility independently.

In addition to the formal records which are essential to the program, there will be a need for many other kinds of records for the purposes of:

-keeping parents informed on such matters as a child's food intake, elimination, amount of rest and special signs of stress;

-keeping staff aware of individual children's growth by means of diary and anecdotal records; and

-keeping total staff aware of the whereabouts of each child at all times and of keeping special instructions in relation to his activities.

These records are functional and do not become a part of the child's permanent record. They should be kept on file for reference purposes, but should be discarded when no longer useful.

The staff may need help in developing skills to determine what is significant enough to record and what methods of recording have proved most successful. There are many existing forms which may be refined for use in specific programs to provide a baseline for collection of data worthy of recording.

D. The Staff as a Team

The staff of a day care program is part of a comprehensive and integrated approach to meeting the developmental needs of children within a framework of service to them and their families. The interrelatedness of the physical, mental, emotional, and social aspects of growth is recognized in the selection and support of staff to implement programs which will avoid the segmentation often occurring in schools and other service organizations.

Respect for individual difference as reflected in the day care program for children applies equally to the differences among staff members, including the variety of expertise which they offer. The special contributions each makes are capitalized on without losing sight of their interrelatedness and without limiting them to those made by professional staff. The cook, cleaning personnel, and bus driver are important people in the lives of the children. Parent and community aides offer help which the teacher, psychologist, nurse, or social worker cannot supplant. The special interests and talents of volunteers can enrich, but not substitute for, other contributions to the program. Every person working in a day care center, for whatever length of time, is a part of a team.

Recognition of interrelatedness and avoidance of segmentation is not enough to assure a team approach to program planning and implementation. Successful work as a team requires trust in each other, acceptance of varying strengths and weaknesses, belief in everyone's continuing capacity for growth, and increasing skill in techniques of collaboration. Support in meeting these requirements is part of the inservice or staff development. The director has responsibility to relate to staff as he wants staff to relate to children and families. This includes:

-accepting each staff member as an individual;

-respecting the contributions each staff member makes;

-relating to each staff member in an honest but not authoritarian fashion; and

-setting the tone for individual growth and for self-evaluation.

As the director sets the tone and demonstrates the process of how people grow and learn, staff team work will be strengthened and its quality improved.

Involvement in establishing basic goals, in identifying specific objectives of day-to-day planning, in periodic reporting of progress, and in reevaluating goals and objectives offers excellent opportunity for building a team. The goal setting and evaluation process is not separate from on-going interaction with the children, but does require scheduled time for individual and group thought and study. There may be times when consultative help outside of the staff is needed to broaden viewpoints or to sharpen particular skills. This help may be provided in scheduled group meetings or workshops or may take the form of personal consultation with the director or a staff member who, in turn, works with subgroups and the total staff group.

The group meeting, the workshop, the training session with a consultant or staff member are often considered the inservice program. But functioning as a team and taking advantage of the wide range of experience and expertise represented in a comprehensive approach are equally important parts of the individual's inservice program of personal and professional development. Informally shared communications about individual children and families help to increase understanding and suggest effective ways of relating to a particular child or parent. Working side by side with another staff member who is sharing a special interest or skill with children may lead to increased possibility of contribution by a staff member. A director's observation of or participation in an activity, followed by a conference with the staff member involved, may contribute more to improved techniques than a general presentation, discussion, or study session. The adults' learning is not separate from the children's.

All learnings are interrelated and mutually enhanced by a shared environment providing stimulation and support.

The director of a day care program has major responsibility for providing an environment which includes a variety of inservice opportunities. In addition to information, person-to-person, on-the-job learning, each adult should have specific opportunities, with necessary time allotment, for inservice activities such as the following:

-Staff meetings for communication on a regular basis in regard to routine, special occasions, specific materials, concerns about individual children and families, coordination of special services, and collaboration with other programs such as school, community recreation programs, etc. These meetings may be planned for total staff or to consider specific problems in numerous subgroups such as

  -teachers and the director;

  -aides and the director or the teachers;

  -one teacher and one or all of the specialists such as psychologist, social worker, nurse, etc.;

  -all personnel working within a particular room or with a particular group of children; or

  -all or part of the staff with volunteers or special resource people.

Whatever the number and makeup of smaller group meetings, there should be fairly frequent meetings of the total staff with the chairmanship being rotated according to the focus of the meeting. The social worker may need an individual case study type of meeting; the nurse or psychologist may need to alert staff to the possibilities and procedures for securing special help on a referral basis; aides or teachers may seek clarification or reconsideration of assumptions on which a particular practice is based. While these meetings are necessary for overall coordination of programs, they also function as inservice experiences for staff.

-Workshops to improve special skills identified as needed by all or part of the staff. These may be planned by the day care personnel or may make use of opportunities to join or to help plan workshops with other groups.

-Professional meetings and conferences of special interest.

-Visiting other day care programs or programs which serve the same children or families. This is especially important in terms of gaining familiarity with school programs serving simultaneously with the day care programs or following up on the day care service.

A systematic liaison should be developed to facilitate exchange of visits and encourage joint meetings with the school classroom teachers and the day care staff serving the 5-14-year-old children. As with other coordination activities, such an exchange represents a significant learning experience which contributes to staff development as well as program improvement.

-Attending college courses. These may be offered by college staff at the center itself, on a nearby campus, or at a community center identified by the college or training institution. These courses, carrying with them college credits, are especially important for the provision of a career ladder seen as one significant way to provide upward mobility to Head Start and other antipoverty programs. These programs have demonstrated that there are many men and women who work well with young children and their families, but may do so on an intuitive level. On-going onsite inservice education, as described in this section, is an integral part of a quality program, and it should be credit granting as any public school inservice program provides credit.

Over and above this, however, help should be given to those staff members who are interested in, and are able to take advantage of, additional study so they will be able to take course work through local colleges and universities, which will lead them to their level of aspiration in this credentialed society. Included in the career ladder concept should be adequate provision for horizontal as well as vertical mobility with comparable salary increases for any staff member who performs competently on any level.

Administrative staff members have a responsibility for helping those involved to seek out institutions which are willing

-to provide a wide range of transferability of credit;

-to consider giving credit for meaningful life experiences;

-to provide opportunity for individualization of programs by use of tutors, correspondence courses, and other independent study; and

-to provide opportunity for credentiality at various levels: A.A. degree, B.A. degree, certificate of accomplishment, or high school equivalency.

Providing opportunities for career ladders includes seeking out local, State, and Federal funding possibilities and supporting staff members involved.

Assurance of effective teamwork and adequate inservice experience presents problems in terms of scheduling necessary time without jeopardizing the continuity and consistent quality of the children's program and recognizing children's needs as having priority in terms of staff time. Careful planning may take advantage of times when the children are napping, not including periods of getting to sleep and waking up, or when they are engaged in activities not requiring maximum staff participation; may capitalize on overlapping of staff work schedules; or may arrange for substitutes and volunteers who rotate attendance at meetings. As an integral part of the day care program, these plans must be protected from cancellation or dilution by the pressure of too frequent "emergency" situations. Staff development and teamwork require more than favorable attitude and intent; they require the commitment of the entire staff and administration.

working with parents

III. WORKING WITH PARENTS

Introduction

The close cooperation with the home, important in every school program, is even more essential in a day care service which exists as a supplement to home care. Basic to a cooperative relationship with parents is a demonstrated staff attitude of respect and genuine valuing of parents' potential and actual contribution to their own understanding and implementation of effective child care practices. An equally vital part of the cooperative relationship is the day care staff's responsibility to recognize and to protect the young child's need to respect his parents' values. However enriching the experiences offered, any program for the young child has the responsibility to support his family in the child's view, even while providing opportunity for the family to learn and grow. Focus is on the recognition of a variety of ways of doing things, many different from the ways of the home, without the suggestion that the adults who share his parents' care of him believe that the way things are done in his family is wrong. The parents' goals and aspirations must be understood and valued. Parents may need help to understand the more objective and broadly based goals of the day care center.

In addition to being supportive of and responsible to the parents, the day care program must be actively involved with the parents on moral and professional grounds, although there may also be legally required policies and procedures for such involvement because of regulations related to funding sources.

Parent involvement and participation may take place on many levels depending on the parents' interest and concerns, the amount of time they have to spend, and on their own needs. The parent program, like the children's program, should have developmental goals which have a broad range of options within certain determined parameters.

The levels of involvement may include any one or combinations of the following activities related to

-the individual child

-procedures and structure

-meetings

-employment of parents

-participation in decision making.

The individual child

Data are available to document the importance of parents in the lives of their children. The work of researchers in many fields -- psychology, child development, and education -- indicates that there is a high degree of correlation between a child's improved ability to function on all levels and the involvement of his parents. Adults working with a young child too often tend to overidentify with the child and to blame parents in a judgmental way for any and all of the child's ills.

It is essential that adults working in a day care program recognize that parents know more about their children than school people will ever know. They have lived with their children on a 24-hour-a-day basis. They know their likes and dislikes, their reactions to stress, their ability to recover equilibrium, and their special needs. Parents bring the specific information about their own child which, when combined with the generalized knowledge and practice staff has regarding how children grow and learn, will enhance the quality of the program for all concerned.

Although working mothers have trouble finding enough time for all their responsibilities and interests, many are not really aware of the value of actively knowing and participating in their child's school and day care service. Many do not seek involvement because they have not been helped to appreciate the value of their own potential contributions or have enormous trust in, or awe of, the trained professionals. School auspices of day care service may, in such cases, perpetuate parents'

tendency toward nonparticipation unless conscious effort is made to develop team relationships.

Because parents using day care do not see much of their children during the day, they may be unaware of aspects of the child's development or of their significance. The multiple staff members who know the child must coordinate their knowledge and concern in order to develop appropriate communication which will not be confusing or contradictory or which might charge the parents with the full responsibility for coordination. The combined staff knowledge and concern must be communicated in an orderly way which involves helping parents through direct assistance or through referral to other sources.

For effective parent-staff discussions, great flexibility in mechanical arrangements and unprecedented changes in the usual school schedules may be needed. A staff member, particularly, may need to stay late by appointment or on a regular schedule, or meet a parent at or near her place of work, perhaps at her lunch hour, or to arrange for a long telephone conversation at a convenient time.

It should never be taken for granted that a parent cannot be available during the day for some individual activity. A parent may have time off, could transpose some working time to free a couple of hours, could use a lunch hour or unexpected free time to meet a particular need of which he is aware. Assumption of a parents' unavailability is usurpation of the parent's decision-making powers. Instead, the staff is responsible for discussing felt needs with the parent; i.e., a parent conference with the social worker or nurse or other specialist, the parent's presence at the child's birthday party or participation in some other special event, a day of observation just to understand or clarify what really goes on, the parent's contribution to the children's activities, or just coming to lunch.

At the time of admission to the day care program, a child may need anything from his mother's presence throughout the first few days of even abbreviated attendance to the usual intake procedures followed by a simple meeting of the teacher with the child on the day of or even before his entrance into the program. It has been found extremely important for the prekindergarten and kindergarten age child, having his initial introduction into a group program away from home, to have his mother's presence at the beginning. A mother who understands the necessity for her presence, and who sees that the teacher values it, will make arrangements to be away from work or home. In fact, she is frequently pleased to discover that she is so much needed and that there is nothing wrong with a young child who wants his mother's presence while getting acquainted with a strange, new situation. If the mother is unable to continue to support the child throughout an extended period, the father or other familiar caretaker may take over until the child is ready to be left in his new surroundings.

A parent may need help in understanding that disrupting use of day care service, due to situations related to work and need for the program, may be harmful for the child. Although the decision may necessarily be a swift one, appropriate arrangements should be made for the child to be informed, preferably by his family. If possible, a family member should be present at whatever activity the day care center plans to mark the child's departure.

If attendance in kindergarten is the reason for withdrawal from the program, careful plans for this transition msut be made with the family. The first day in kindergarten is an important day in the life of the child, and his family and should not be usurped by the day care staff. Escorting the child on this big day is an experience which is rightfully the parents, and it should be encouraged. If such participation by parents is not possible, the family should be helped to identify an intimate home substitute. A grandparent, a much older brother or sister, or a frequently used sitter can assume the responsibility.

Procedures and structures

Carefully worked out coordination of procedures and systems of communication are essential, not only between home and day care service, but also, in the case of older children, between home, regular school, and day care service. Attention to practical bits of procedure is important, not simply to produce an easily manageable program but for the purpose of developing

a system that encourages individual development while it provides for all elements in that development.

Attendance

Good home/school procedures in relation to attendance already exist in many schools. There is mutual recognition of the validity of an established procedure for the parent to notify the school promptly if the child is to be absent, and that the school, in the case of unexplained absence, takes prompt steps to find out what has gone wrong with the child and/or the communication process. When a child does not appear for a day care session after the regular schoolday, the day care staff who are not informed of the absence in advance have the same responsibility that a parent would have if a child did not return home from school. Whatever arrangements are made for a parent to inform the school, the two school-based units must develop a system of communication to insure that there is no gap between school and day care service. Children should play their part in such notification, informing day care staff if they are staying late in school, even in the same building. In addition to the practicality for the day care operation, this has value as a child begins to see the importance of keeping his parents informed and gives the child assurance that adults are concerned for his well-being - a source of security for some children and of annoyance to others. In all cases, including pre-kindergarten children, the day care staff will need to develop a system for checking children in and out and for allowing them to leave with or without escort, not only in accordance with parental instruction but also within the school's policies. In some day care centers, older children may leave individually at the close of the day because of the differences in parents' working hours, etc. When the children leave at the same time, either in clusters or all at once, by bus or other means, the checkout will be somewhat simpler but should never be taken for granted without accounting for each child.

Movement in and out of the day care center during the day, other than for school classes, is built into a good day care curriculum. The understanding that children will move in and out, the recognition that they will sometimes be alone, sometimes with another child, sometimes accompanied by an adult or older child or staff member, are all matters of general policy and program that relate to philosophy of the day care center and require the parents' awareness and acceptance in advance. Helping the child to increase his exercise of freedom in exploring and using community resources is a day care program responsibility. Part of carrying it out well is to be accountable to the parents for staying within the accepted policy and for informing the parents of any deviations as the occasion arises. Written statements of the policy should be available to the parents as part of their manual, and any agreement relating to an individual child should be recorded and signed, just as medical permission forms and transportation permission forms are filed.

The decision about a child's whereabouts, places he is permitted to go, and any conditions related to going there, is a parent responsibility.

In general, these places and activities will be of three kinds:

1. Parent-selected activities for individual children; i.e., religious education class, regular or occasional visit to dentist or orthodontist, music lesson, choir practice, scout troop, etc., with parents responsible for enrollment, etc.

2. Community available experiences considered by staff as adjunct curriculum activities. The day care staff will help parents to understand these activities and give consent for their child's participation, with arrangements made by the day care staff. In addition to group trips under direct supervision of day care staff, this would include such activities as community swimming pool use, community center ballet lessons, theatricals, athletics, and ceramics, using the public library, shopping, exchange visits with a non-day care friend (with visit to day care center as the exchange), etc.

3. School related activities: the day care center must be kept informed about the plan for these activities and will take proper responsibility for the child's attendance or perform any other appropriate parent-surrogate role. This is likely to involve such activities as tutoring, extracurricular music groups, team sports, dramatics, club programs, etc.

There is considerable evidence that parents tend to be stricter in limiting children's mobility when the children are in day care than when they are at home. Some parents view community activities as "wasting" available day care supervision or as less close supervision. Some are concerned if the day care community is not the same one as that of the home. Whatever their reasons, it is clear that even parents who would help their children develop independence in using community resources at home are reluctant to allow the same development by the day care center. Some have carried this reluctance to the extent of being unwilling to allow the children to move between the school and center with the same freedom as if their children were going to school from home. Parents and staff need to confer and decide on the child's ability and on a plan for continuous and progressive mastery of more advanced stages of independence. Inconsistency or overdependency on supervision can otherwise make a child vulnerable to the danger inherent in the lack of normal skills.

Meetings

Meetings of day care parents as a group are almost always a matter of evening or weekend sessions. Group meetings may be of committees - for planning parent programs or dealing with community representation, for policy advice or for producing a newsletter - or as a whole, for action related to the day care operation, for information about the program or for conduct of parent organizations. Provisions must be made to fit the realities of the parents' situation. A long working day and an early evening of meal preparation and management are not conducive to the successful gathering of parents for a busy working session in the late evening.

Some of the most successful group meetings of day care parents include supper sessions for the entire family, with parents coming to the day care center from work, bringing older and younger children along to join the children already attending the day care center. The family may eat together in a party with other family groups, then separate so that parents have their meeting while all the children have fun in the day care rooms, sometimes with special entertainment. This means that whole families are through with the meeting and ready to leave early in the evening, having had their meal and a program of either work or play.

In scheduling meetings, consideration should be given to the possibility of conflict with regular school parent/teacher conferences and PTA meetings. It is important that the school population not be split into two separate groups on the basis of use or nonuse of day care services, even though sensible recognition has to be given to the existence of this fact. One of the problems that can be created inadvertantly by a school-operated program involving parents prior to regular school entrance and regular PTA activity is the creation of a day care clique amounting sometimes to a mystique that seeks to hold itself apart. The day care staff needs to be alert to the danger of a situation that encourages parents to relate to a special program at the cost of participating in a well integrated total parent program. This in no way precludes the continuance of a warm relationship of an ongoing or alumni contact with the day care program, but due recognition should be given by the staff in any program that as the children grow, the parents' interests and focus will move on to the current situation, however fond the memories and associations of even the recent past.

Content for parent meetings should be determined by parents themselves and may include a smorgasbord of choices ranging from child rearing practices to community-wide problems, such as transportation, housing, voter registration. Some parents may elect to work intensively in small groups on a topic of particular concern; others may be interested in large informational meetings; some may be interested only in the light, entertainment like meetings. Every effort should be made to provide for special requests, such as basic education courses leading to high school equivalency diplomas, homemaking courses, vocational or avocational courses. The public school district should be able to set up such classes if there is sufficient interest within the framework of its existing continuing education program. If none exists, the day care director should seek out alternative possibilities in nearby public school districts, the local community colleges, or organizations involved in informal adult education, such as the YMCA and YWCA.

Wherever possible the series of meetings or classes should provide some kind of credit or certification of attainment which may be helpful in providing parents some upward mobility. Assistance in setting up programs for adults is available through the Division of Continuing Education, State Education Department.

Employment

Employment of parents in the day care program in any position for which they are qualified can bring many fringe benefits. Interested target area parents could assume responsibilities as health, classroom, community, or social services aides, or whatever paraprofessional categories are called for in the day care proposal. Many bring with them a maturity, a knowledge of the target area, and often a homespun philosophy of child rearing practice which can enrich the program. Employment of the target area staff in nonprofessional or preprofessional positions has a number of possible advantages:

-It provides some needed economic stability to a low income family.

-It provides parents with an opportunity to make a contribution while learning more about child rearing practices and school programs.

-It builds parents' confidence which is communicated to and builds confidence in their children.

-It has great potential for spillover effects as parent employees use their new learnings in their own homes and in their neighborhoods.

Decision making

As the importance of parent involvement in the education of their children has gained recognition, many programs have begun to mandate the involvement of parents on advisory and policymaking committees. In some programs, these committees have been purely perfunctory; in others, they have produced havoc, wasting the creative energies of both school people and parents on futile bickering and open warfare rather than using those energies to mobilize their resources to attack problems of mutual concern.

It should be clearly recognized from the outset that the board of education is the duly elected body which has the legal power to make final decisions. But with this power comes the grave responsibility for listening to parents and using their ideas in whatever final decisions are made. Communicating the reasons for making decisions and helping parents to learn more about the decision-making process will do much to produce more intelligent citizenry and to provide support of those board members whose judgment the people feel can be trusted.

Parent advisory groups must have a clear understanding of purpose and be increasingly well informed of professional goals and methods so that the policies developed will be on principled bases. The policy advisory group offers significant opportunity for the staff to gain understanding of the parents' wishes and intent and for both groups to work together with others from the community to provide a day care program that meets the needs of the children and their families.

It is the staff's responsibility to help the parents understand and manage the task of participating actively in the day care program and policy development rather than to take over the decision making. Busy parents who need day care for their children often think they haven't time to participate in management of the program and may be all too willing to leave this responsibility to the staff. The staff, in turn, may fall into the trap of apparent freedom from the necessity for coordination and integration or may actually feel that busy parents should be protected from the demands of participation, but protection should be selective and constructive without encouraging parents to abdicate their responsibility to the program.

Staff with public school experience and training may need special help in maintaining a balance of cooperation because active involvement of parents, especially participation in policymaking program development, has not been customary in most public school operations. The skills needed for successful implementation of active parent involvement will need to be developed within most school systems, but the resulting coordination will benefit the entire school, not just the day care service.

children's program

- general principles
- ▲ prekindergarten children
- ■ five to fourteen year old children

IV. CHILDREN'S PROGRAM IN A DAY CARE CENTER

A. General

While the principles of good school programing provide considerable basis for the planning of a day care program, they cannot serve as the sole basis. The danger in operating a group day care program, especially under the auspices of a school, is that it will be too much like an organized school program. The essential purpose of the day care service as supplement to family care dictates difference in basis and approach to program. The kinds of experiences and activities needed have their stance in the home and community rather than in the school, even though offered there. Limiting children in day care programs to materials and activities that are the bases of good classroom experiences means depriving them of much of their ordinary opportunity to explore, observe, experiment, wonder, and conclude independently and in relation to the community. Part of this opportunity is exposure to the minutiae of the adult social world as it takes place in homemaking, on the street, in the store, the park, the laundromat, the farm -- all outside the classroom. Day care programs must provide as much of this opportunity as possible.

Especially for children under 6, the group program for longer hours may prevent the healthy development of a sense of self. Conformity to reasonable group practices too easily becomes denial of individual personal need as a result of submission to routines that make adult life more predictable and controlling. Particularly in denying the young child autonomy over his own body, an organized program tends to violate his developing sense of self-awareness, self-respect, and self-direction. The home threatens that autonomy less as the young child learns to take responsibility for going to the bathroom, finds a balance of active and quiet play, eats when he is hungry, because the situation makes it easier to recognize and comply with his natural rhythms of need. When the day care staff is thoroughly aware of the importance of avoiding tyranny over the child's body and individual physical needs, the day care program can also be a positive setting for the growth of selfhood.

What does this mean in terms of practical planning? It means that, in carrying out the aspects of programing, the children themselves should have maximum opportunity to make choices. Alternatives should be flexible. It means that careful thought should be given the decision as to which routines should be structured as group activities and which as individual; or which might appear as a group activity only because individual children group themselves. For example, in the case of the snack after school, should it be set out on tables, on a counter for individual self-service, in a special refrigerator or section of the refrigerator for children to serve themselves whenever ready? The staff may make decisions early in the season based on a rationale that makes sense and can be reevaluated periodically. Later, the children themselves should be involved in the decision. This is simply a small example of the need to examine each piece of the program in the light of necessary or desirable routine. It is not a matter of perpetually providing multiple choices but rather of providing a comfortable, orderly atmosphere in which individuals can pursue their individual and group interests -- and sometimes even discover what those are.

The essence of the day care program is that it uses the structure and materials of the day care rooms, community resources, activities, and people, and all happenstance events -- repairman, deliveryman, etc. -- to produce a balanced program for the children, not a program that specializes in exploiting the possibilities of group living simply because the group is the medium through which day care is provided.

The program suggestions which follow should be used with due regard to their value as a day care service with relevant principles built in, even though the same suggestions could be applied to another kind of program with a different focus and slightly different organization. The program material is divided into two sections:

- -suggestions for the young child who is in a day care setting all or a large part of a day
- -suggestions for the older child (age 5-14 years) who attends day care before and/or after school hours

B. Program for 3 to 5 year olds

All aspects of a good early childhood experience relate to day care since any program for young children concerns itself with:

- -anticipating and working out provisions for coping with mother-child separation anxiety
- -provision for building strong sense of self which will lead to building of self-confidence in each child
- -provision for developing inner controls which will lead each child to develop self-control and self-discipline
- -provision for exploration of spaces, materials, and relationships which lead to development of self-propelled learners.

There is no intent to include in this material specific suggestions related to early childhood education and child development. This is already done in many excellent texts, pamphlets, and other sources. It is assumed that professional staff employed will already have qualifications to set up such a program based on sound knowledge of human growth and development and learning theory; and further, that professional staff has had enough actual practicum in the field to provide leadership for other staff in the program. Here the concentration will be on those areas which are peculiar to day care.

Entrance into day care

Communication with parents should begin even before a child is enrolled in the program. It will probably start with a description of the program, a chance for parents' questions to be answered, and a joint determination about the needs for day care. Visits to the home, if this seems appropriate and welcome, will provide an opportunity to get acquainted with the total family. Informal contacts as the child is brought to, and taken from, school may very well be with a variety of family members and getting acquainted beforehand will enrich all future communications.

If this day care experience is the child's first of having someone other than his mother care for him outside his own home, both mother and child will need to be protected from feeling anxiety about separating. Even for those children who have had a variety of experiences with groups and sitters, a new setting with new adults and new peers demands careful planning to achieve an easy transition.

A gradual beginning may be achieved in a variety of ways. A child may need his mother's presence throughout the first few days. For some children, a simple meeting with the teacher, parent, and child before the child's entrance into the program will be sufficient. This initial introduction into a group program away from home is extremely important to young children and should not be short circuited.

For a small child, the vaunted pleasures of other children and things to play with are of comparatively little interest until the security of an adult relationship is established. One of the major tasks of the adults in the program is to develop such a relationship. Its beginnings lie not in the overtures to the child, but rather in the acceptance of the child's mother and his dependence on her. For most children the away-from-home experience will take on meanings if there is sufficient support in symbolic presence of familiar favorite things brought from home, and in the teacher's willingness to talk about home and refer to the important certainty of returning there.

A new child's entrance into a relatively stable group is quite different from establishment of a group of all new children. The presence of children who "know the ropes" makes it possible for a newcomer to have support from his peers as well as the adults. As in any good early childhood program, it would be unthinkable to admit a whole new group of children in a single day or even over a space of a few days.

Mixed age groups

Whatever the plan and organization of grouping, ample provision must be made for each child to proceed at his own pace. The presence of children of differing levels of maturity and experiences offers more opportunity for learning from example and observation than is possible when all children are of approximately the same age level. The juxtaposition of widely varying ages makes more likely each child's opportunity to play out his own varying roles in relation to others; from an independent and helping role to a dependent and demanding one; from beginning explorer to competent manipulator; from able leader to supportive follower; from inquisitive learner to confident teacher. Each of these roles brings significant meaning to a child's growth and development as a member of his peer group, his family, society. The mixed age grouping also makes it possible for permitting children from one family to be together in one group if this seems desirable. In isolated rural areas, it provides opportunity to have programs closer to home and in a sense simulates the old one room country schoolhouse philosophy.

Early arrival

Careful preparation must be made for the center to be ready to receive and welcome the earliest arrival no matter what time is agreed upon. Often staff takes turns arriving early unless the schedule is so arranged that the same adult consistently has the early shift. Who and how many people are needed is a matter for each center to work out. Able assistance can be counted on from the cook, an aide, or a part-time college student. It is important that the early staff not only be mature, but that they be "morning" people and not apt to be groggy or cross early in the morning.

Some children may need to have additional rest upon arrival, but this is not to be prescriptively expected of all children. Quiet activities, opportunity for immediate nourishment, and gentle approaches are the order of this early morning schedule. As other children arrive, the early birds will have an opportunity to get "into the swing" gradually.

The long day

The long day is not only hard on staff, but also on children. Careful planning can prevent too many head-on collisions by providing a comprehensive, flexible program which will help each child to develop both freedom and self-control.

Factors involved in planning for the long day include consideration of the following:

-Pacing

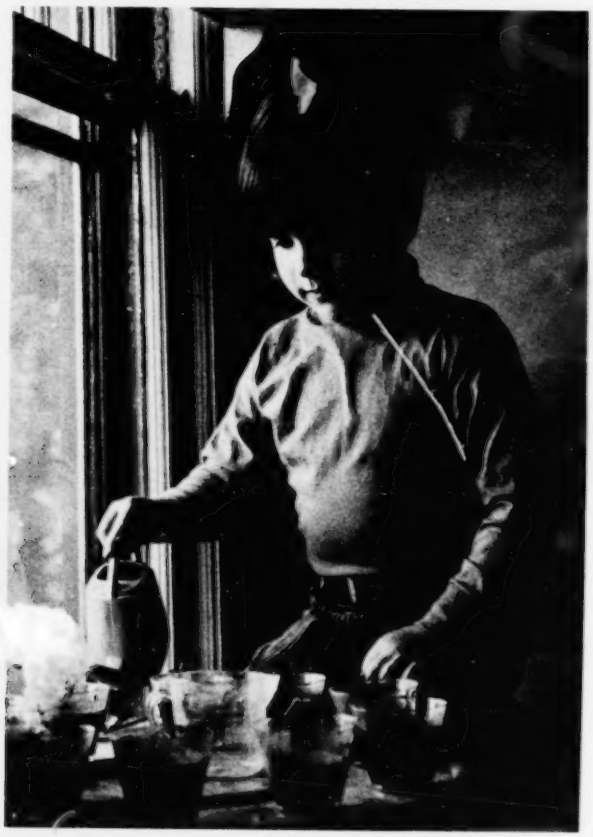
The staff needs to establish a skeletal program, organizing major aspects on both a daily and a long range on-going basis. This is important to provide children with the security of knowing "what's going to happen next" but within those parameters there must be opportunities for creating many possibilities which will keep the program from becoming "the same old thing." Attention should be paid to seasonal changes involving not only the weather, but also family patterns, such as changing working hours and changing sibling school hours.

Planning for routines, individual and group experiences, balancing quiet and vigorous active experiences, and developing an increasing awareness of each child's fatigue and frustration threshold will all help to keep a program running smoothly. The importance of the planning factor cannot be minimized. It must not be reduced to an identical schedule posted on a bulletin board.

-Simulating the home environment

Staffing patterns suggest that each staff member must have an opportunity for regular breaks if he is to continue to be effective. Many programs do not take into consideration, however, that children, too, find it difficult to be in the same room with the same people for many long hours. A change of scenery is a welcome respite and should be planned for each child within a long day. A short walk, an opportunity to visit another classroom, a trip to the store with the cook or to the post office with the secretary can provide the needed break. Use of high school students, college students, or volunteers of any age can provide the needed one-to-one relationship a child would ordinarily have at home with his mother.

Providing opportunities for homelike activities such as doing the wash, baking, cleaning, or doing chores or errands can also provide relief from the sameness of a day's activities. Opportunity for individual or small groups of children to do special things with special adults is as exciting in day care as it would be if planned at home.



-Selection of activities

In a long day, it is necessary to plan for large blocks of time during which a child may select his own activity and children with whom to work. This means that staff will have responsibility for making careful plans for providing a wide range of available choices which are determined by taking clues from children. Children create the basis for staff planning by their spontaneous activity as well as by expressed interests. Adults in the program have a responsibility for capitalizing on their observations by planning activities which will lead children to further discovery.

It is recognized that play is the business of children, and it is not something in which parents and teachers permit children to indulge until they are ready for "real learning." The intellectual content of play is well documented. Suffice it to say that anyone involved in day care must be committed to this philosophical premise and must understand the deep learnings, both psychological and intellectual, which are involved in a child's play.

-Meals and snacks

Consideration of meals and snacks as integral components of curriculum and program reflects recognition that food represents more than nutrition. The giving and receiving of it are related to our deepest feelings of self-esteem which begin at birth. Basic trust or lack of trust in others can begin with the conditions affecting the experiences of being fed. Since children enrolled in long day programs receive a substantial part of their daily food at the school, cooks and teachers should regard the feeding of a child not as a burdensome chore, but as an important area of their relationship as nurturers.

Enjoyable meals are an asset to the program. Being fed in a pleasant way helps the child to learn and affects his attitude toward the world. Conversely, being fed in a resentful manner is damaging even if the meal contains the proper amount of nutritional value. The following suggestions may be useful:

-It is important that the cook likes children and is able to interact positively and cheerfully with them as well as making an effort to prepare wholesome, attractive, and appealing meals for young children. She may also help foster feelings of competence in children by assisting with their cooking experiences at times.

-Breakfast should be served to all children who desire it, and early arrivers may need the mid-morning snack in addition.

-If self-service breakfasts are available, possible gorging of food by some children can be expected to cease after a week or so, or when the child realizes that offering of food is consistent. Self-service and flexible availability are ideal for the prevention of fatigue in the child who burns his energy rapidly.

-Lunch should be served family style, in small groups, and with teachers sharing the common meal. In this way, conversation is encouraged and lunch becomes an important socializing aspect of the program.

-Small portions should be served with the clear understanding that more is available. This reliability fosters self-control as the child learns that he does not have to grab in order to get filled.

-Finger foods should be served frequently, especially to children who lack finger dexterity when handling forks.

-Introduction of new foods and textures should be accompanied by known liked foods. The child should not be forced to eat unfamiliar foods, but should be encouraged to at least taste them. (Some of the finest small muscle activity may be witnessed at these times as the child succeeds in carefully serving himself the minutest portion imaginable!)

-Small children do not usually enjoy mixed foods such as casseroles, or messy foods such as sloppy-joes. They enjoy foods that are in separate and identifiable form. This preference has an educational value by stimulating identification of different foods as well as for developing a taste for a wide variety.

-Serving foods associated with ethnic backgrounds helps preserve the child's sense of value of his particular culture.

-Because children's taste buds are more sensitive than those of adults, spiced foods should be avoided.

-Children should be served desserts which are of value nutritionally, such as ice cream, puddings, fruit, applesauce, or gelatin. Desserts are part of the meal and should never be withheld as punishment.

-The food dislikes of teachers should not be revealed to the children. For instance, if she does not like milk, a small amount should be evidenced in her glass anyway.

-Children should be encouraged to help set the table on a rotating basis. This is sometimes helpful for poor eaters, who then approach the meal with more anticipation. Children involved in preparation of food will often taste what they've prepared.

-Slow eaters should be allowed adequate time. Rushing and scolding produces undesirable emotional effects.

-If self-service food is not available during the afternoon, the snack should be slightly more substantial than that served during mid-mornings. This takes into account the longer time span between lunch and the child's dinner time and helps to prevent fatigue.

-Rest

Rest is another essential human need, and like nutrition, it is also emotionally loaded, so there is more to rest time than putting children on a cot and expecting sound sleep.

In a well-balanced program, vigorous activities are alternated with those that are quiet in order to prevent fatigue. During the morning, especially just before lunch, the quiet activities may be considered as short rest times.

For children attending a long day, it is necessary that time and space be provided for adequate rest during the afternoon. A darkened room and the quiet manner of the teacher set the tone of the atmosphere, as well as the usual concern for the needs of the individual child. For some children, at first it is an uneasy time, a weepy time when even the happiest child suddenly is reminded of his mother. Sensitive workers must be nearby with words or touches of reassurance.

-Each child must have exclusive use of his own cot or other sleeping arrangement.

-To allow for privacy, movable screens should separate each child's area.

-Each child should be allowed to rest for as long or as little as necessary. A child who does not sleep should have quiet activities planned for him either in a different room or on his own cot. He should be clearly aware that he is expected to respect the rest needs of others. Thus, rest time is also a time for allowing choice making. At one school, there is an interesting example of this: at the beginning of school, all the children wanted to stay in the quiet room. Since the room was small, it was crowded and rather uncomfortable. The teachers gave the children two choices (1) they could participate in the quiet activity room at the beginning of the rest period and later retire to their own cots, or (2) they could rest first on their cots for a short period, then go into the activity room. Within 2 weeks, none of the children went to the activity room. With this particular group, it was clear that they wished to be in the room with each other. It may not be so with another set of individuals.

-Each child should have something that he may take to bed with him. This could be something he brings from home or something the school designates as his -- which he does not have to share.

Joy

Essential to a program for young children is something that perhaps should be taken for granted, but, unfortunately, cannot be. A conscientious, carefully planned program provided by hard-working adults is not enough to protect young children's development if there is not present a sense of joy and fun, laughter and enthusiasm. These cannot be formally and officially built into the program; they can be provided for, however, by assuring that the adults selected to be with the children are people who take real pleasure in working with them, have enthusiasm, have humor, and can enjoy and be responsible for children. The program can be enriched by the presence of young people who bring a sense of fun and enthusiasm. The charm of fun and laughter and enjoyment is not merely an esthetic but an essential element in children's learning and development.

C. Program for children 5 to 14 years of age

The day care program for children 5 to 14 years of age is based on the same principles of growth and development as the program for young children and includes the same basic components. Planning will be done with particular attention to the function of supplementing home care, not simply repeating or extending school experiences. In terms of grouping practices, room arrangement, and program planning, every effort will be made to assure each child the opportunity to play a variety of roles in different combinations of age levels, activities, and experiences.

Grouping

Whether or not the school classes are organized as age groups, a day care program should have a wide age span in each group. Where feasible, the program for older children may well be an integral part of the program for the young ones except in terms of time span. Or it may be that there will be some overlaps of 5 to 8 year olds with the younger children and planned opportunity for the 9 to 14's to play special helping roles on occasion.

Older children could be arranged in age groups of 5 to 8 years, 9 to 11, and 12 to 14, with overlapping because of uneven maturation or special interests. Placement decisions should be made individually, in consultation with parents, and should consider intimate friendships, sibling or neighbor relationships. In the wide age span grouping, there should be clusters of a developmental level and not a token placement that leaves a child isolated.

The room and its arrangement

The room is essentially a clubroom or home playroom in a school rather than a classroom. If it is used by another group for the school-day, the metamorphosis at the beginning and the end of each day is part of the program and can serve to create a real sense of ownership by the children themselves. The furniture, even if of the conventional classroom type including individual desks, must be imaginatively arranged in functional relationship to activities requiring much free space, adequate table level work space, and various cozy, somewhat secluded spots for individual use. Hopefully, as an extension of the room, outdoor play area will be available for play opportunities similar to those offered in home neighborhoods.

Communication, a special consideration

Communication in this content is not intended to refer to the relationship between staff member and child, nor to their sensitivity to each other. It refers to the practicalities of transmitting information on the whereabouts of people and activities. Clear understanding of the basic schedule arrangements and all the individual ramifications and alterations makes a framework steady enough to support considerable flexibility and creativity.

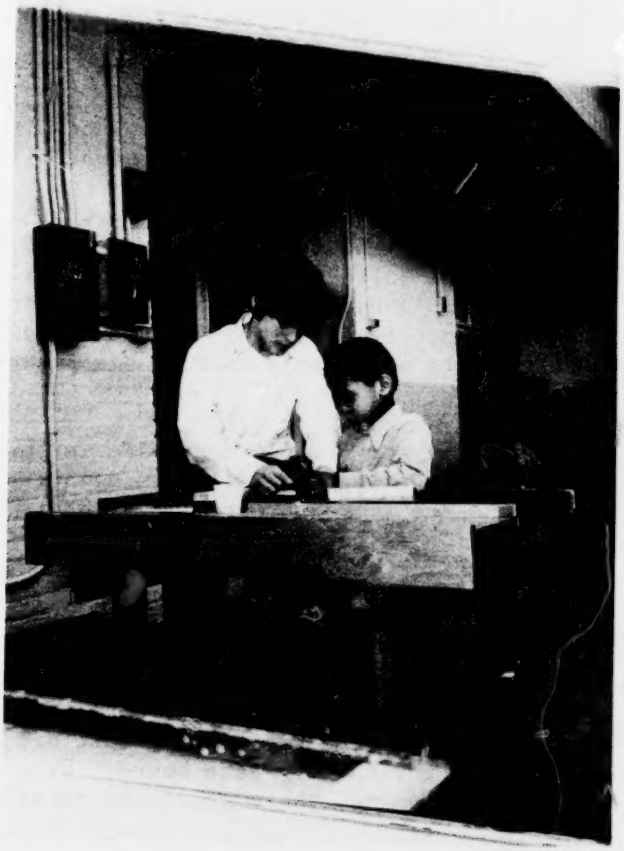
This communication consists of several parts.

-Advance staff/parent information and understanding about the procedures of notification. Parent consent is established in general for some activities, and an understanding of the need for parents to transmit consent for specific instances is essential; i.e.,permission for a child to visit a non-day care child for the afternoon, with a clear understanding about responsibility for transportation home.

-Posted information, available to both children and staff, including regular schedules of activities and responsibilities and special assignments and events.

-Daily check-in and greeting, exchange of new special information and its posting, not necessarily by teacher, but perhaps by a "scribe," volunteer, or assigned intern.

-Noting changes in information, announcing pop-up information and events, arriving at essential decisions in group meetings.



The program

The day care program on a regular school day will be concerned primarily with the hours before and after school. In some cases, they will vary from one community to another according to the needs of the parents and children. Some centers open at 6:30 a.m., others at 7 or 8. Information on the family's need is determined at the time of admission to the program, and a schedule is developed to take care of the expected attendance. An administrative decision should be made as to the desirability of having children check into the day care center in the morning even if they will not use it until the afternoon.

The 5 to 14 year old children in the early morning program may not be able to use the same rooms they will occupy in the afternoon if these are being set up for school classes. Depending on the space available, a center may be established adjoining the prekindergarten-day care room or, more likely, space may be set aside in the cafeteria, library, or a multipurpose room for early arrivers. Sociable play, opportunity for review of schoolwork for those who wish to do so, and outdoor activity are all suitable for the time before school, if supervision is available. Where children arrive very early and seem tired, consideration should be given to some provision for resting. It is possible that discussion with the parents might result in an adjustment of the child's home schedule.

Breakfast should be available to all children who arrive early, whether it is their first or second morning meal. It should be a nourishing and attractive meal simple enough not to compete with a family-served meal or appear to take over the family's responsibility beyond needed service.

Setting the tables, serving the meal in group or buffet style, and cleaning up are all activities suitable for the children's participation. The degree will vary from simple cooperation to actual food preparation and serving, perhaps even supervising a table of young children. The deciding factor is the child's need for a comfortable period that leaves him ready for school.

The major visible program for 5 to 14 year olds is the after-school session. Two other programs needing special planning are all-day programs during school vacations and the summer program. The basis for all three is the same, despite variation in hours, activities, and other details. Some suggestions are offered for these specific situations, but these should be recognized as depending for their effectiveness upon implementation of a basic view of a day care program.

Routines of nurture

Provisions for essential routines of eating, resting, sleeping, and cleanliness build a skeleton for the day care hours. Even if snacks are informal and more or less on demand, their provision makes for some shaping of the schedule.

Play with guidance

In essence, the program is one of play in a group setting with community resources always in mind. While the program will include direct instruction, organized activities, and part or whole group sessions, the planning and provision of these activities should be flexible and participation voluntary. A free-choice program in a setting that offers a wide range of activities without restricting the children to the day care center permits normal development of interests, responsibilities, and skills. In too many day care programs, children 8 and older become restless because of inadequate activities. When not dissatisfied, they frequently are immature and overprotected as a result of oversupervision and adult domination.

The quality of guidance and staff is the key to the successful use of the day care service by the children enrolled. Quality can be determined by how well they do the following:

-help children to explore the available materials and develop both skills and interests

-help children to develop their own rules and structures for a program appropriate to their age and ability

-stimulate appropriate organized activities if they are not spontaneously forthcoming, helping the children to develop teams, plays, and projects -- small and whole group, short-term an continuing, holiday programs, and special events

-help children to learn about and select from available community resources for participation

-help children to interact with other day care groups and children in other groups, exchanging visits, and entering into cooperative activities

-help children to locate relevant books and materials for their interests

-arranges for a room supply

-orders or requests materials and helps children to participate in these procedures

-encourages children to use the library in the school and in the community

-assure balance of outdoor/indoor and active/inactive projects

-help to develop special plans when interest is revealed, adding help of volunteers when necessary or desirable; i.e.,

newspaper produced by group or by the whole day care center;

map of the area, locating residences of all the children in the group;

child development study involving supervised practice with younger children and perhaps training for babysitting services

-help children to be interested in each other's participation in special projects and in community groups; i.e.,

visit member of group participating in outside activity, such as a play or team game

-help children as individuals to develop and practice skills and to explore and extend their interests; i.e.,

encourages functional use of writing, recording, editing;

finds ways to help children perform tasks of shopping, ordering food, supplies, and library materials, and inventorying;

helps children to handle money when functional opportunity presents itself;

helps children to take an active part in getting needed information, making transportation schedules, sending thank you notes for the group, and issuing invitations

What it looks like

The after-school day care program will vary from group to group and from day to day. It cannot be described in advance in a specific schedule, but it can be seen in a plan that becomes a schedule when fleshed out and stabilized by any specific group of children and teaching team. It will have a general appearance like this:

-Children check in, recognize, confirm, or arrange any special event or assignment.

-Set up room; staff and children working together according to a routine plan plus any special decisions. If the children are in their own established quarters, the teacher may have made more advance preparation than in a shared or transposed room, but in either case there will be chores for the children to carry out; i.e., preparing paints for easels, feeding animals, watering plants, and setting up snacks. There may be much moving of furniture and displays in the case of shared space.

-Snacks served in some way decided upon as appropriate for this group. In whatever manner the snacks are ava[illegible]le, the children will participate actively in setting up and clearing away.

-At some point -- perhaps even twice -- during the afternoon there is likely to be a meeting or assembly for reporting, deciding, discussing, sharing, planning.

-Play will be in progress for most of the afternoon. Some children will move from one activity to another; some may spend the entire time in a single endeavor; some may spend a block of time in a group project.

One child may leave in the middle of the afternoon, reminding the teacher that he has to go directly home. Two may arrange to go to the library; only one needs to go but the rule is that none goes alone. They return in plenty of time to rehearse with a singing foursome because they planned it that way.

Immediately after the snack, most of the boys go outside to play basketball because a college student basketball player is coaching today. The others go out later because they are busy and basketball is not their interest.

Late in the afternoon, some children are continuing to work on a project. Others are reading by themselves; a few are listening to an adult read aloud. The children begin to leave, each carrying out his share of cleaning up before he goes, checking out, and saying goodby. The television is turned on by one child who is joined by another; they are asked to keep the sound down because nobody else wants to hear. A late snack is made available and all of the children eat it, some of them taking several helpings. Everybody pitches in for the final room straightening before checking out and going to the bus.

A single holiday or week's vacation during the school

The actual program for a single day or for the first day of a vacation week might be just carrying out of ordinary activities or program wishes expressed during the shorter day care days; however, special planning for a somewhat gala feeling may be desirable because of the nature of the holiday or because being left in the school setting when others are away may produce a sense of having been left out of a celebration. Joining in a community observance or putting on a celebration as a room group or as an entire day care center population might be very satisfying, including necessary planning and special arrangements such as having a box lunch to eat picnic fashion.

Summer program

As the summer begins, the day care program in a school can usually plan to expand the space it occupies and, in the case of shared space, can settle down happily to the privacy of its own quarters. In most cases, much of the activity can be moved out of doors for at least part of the day. Hopefully there will be opportunities for special activities such as fishing, swimming, or participation in conservation, day camps or other short summer programs to provide a change of pace. In centers located in crowded cities, moving the whole program to a country, a country-like, or suburban setting for a few weeks or for the whole summer is desirable and sometimes possible. Certainly, whatever the environment of the day care program, there should be relief during the summer from high organization without sacrificing sufficient structure to give security to a longer program. Whatever is found to work best is what should be arranged, always with plenty of opportunity for individual children to find alternatives to organized activities in individual and small group projects and activities.

Special note regarding young teenagers

While the above statements of principle and program apply to this group of young people, it is perhaps wise to make explicit that the way in which they are carried out, with due regard to the developmental level of those being served, makes for a program that is very different in appearance from the younger children. Planning and administering the program is surely a very large part of the experience of these youngsters. The projects they will be interested in will have a high degree of reality, of personal application, and of community content.

Sewing and stitchery will frequently be activities for mastering the craft to produce articles of clothing and home decoration. Dressing up will take the form of dramatic production but will also involve learning the arts of personal grooming. Food preparation by both girls and boys will be for acquiring skill and for functional display of their growing ability. Music making is very likely to include attempts to master (perhaps massacre) the guitar or to produce a combo.

Printing press, photography, and woodcarving will occasion no surprise to the adult but will set an administrative task of getting these activities underway.

Some of the teenagers' activities will be related to providing service to the day care center and to the community. Operating a duplicating machine, learning to work with young children and helping in their program, taking responsibility for library or film exchange and projector operation are all welcome services in the day care program. Initiating or joining community ecology projects and cleanup campaigns is likely to appeal to this age group.

Teenagers will need to see evidence that the adults in charge of a day care center do not regard them as babies to be "sat" with, but as young people who are cared about and cared for on a level commensurate with their development. They may well need considerable assistance in learning to use their own powers and to handle recognition.

day care and the community

V. DAY CARE PROGRAM AND THE COMMUNITY

The need for total community involvement in any program which serves the Nation's most important resource--its children--seems obvious. The involvement varies from community to community: from active participation to silent support; from a high degree of concern on the part of the consumers, providers, and beneficiaries to limited, and sometimes grudging, financial support. On the national scene, day care is at present the center of a highly emotional, ideological battle in the political arena. Tantalizing proposals and speculative analysis reflect the great variation in attitudes toward this specialized kind of service. No local community is without the influence of these current events. Meetings and planning sessions reflect the depth of concern and the height of frustration. Not all concerns are centered on quality programs for children and families. There are many hidden agendas.

The community's need for day care services is a reflection of the community's longstanding unmet needs coupled with the sociological reasons for the recent increases in demand for day care services. These include the need for two wage earners in a family; the single parent; the absence of the "nuclear" family--adults other than parents; the threat of loss of welfare payments if adults in family do not work; the home which is not suitable for a child's full-time living because of presence or absence of some important factors such as physical or mental health of parents; the need for skilled workers; and most recently the women's liberation movement for freedom of women to work if they wish. Some day care services are provided as a direct concomitant of these reasons. Whatever the reasons, the service provided has to be appropriate to the family needs, not diluted or distorted to fit the school's usual patterns determined by traditional staff hours and bus schedules. One way to insure that the service provided is really responsible to all the elements in its existence is to have a broad base of community responsibility for advisory and decision-making responsibilities. Broadly based representation, however, does not per se create a valid base for any specialized service operation. Sufficient expertise of technical knowledge and management responsibility must also be represented. Further, there must be sufficient commitment on the part of the staff and governing body to devote time, effort, and skill to the study of the specialized situation in order to come up with alternatives based on sound fundamental princples.

Since children are the Nation's largest voiceless minority group, there must be adequate provision for advocacy of children's rights and needs. Children must not be expected to make all the adjustments to a situation to make it easier for the various adults who have a stake in the program.

There must also be no abdication of responsibility on the part of the governing body. Responsive decisions are not necessarily made by referendum or by popular vote. The whole community cannot be held responsible for the operation of the program; this is the responsibility of the duly elected body--the board of education.

Public relations

Two-way communication with the community is essential. Public information should be handled by a specific individual who is oriented to his role and to the policies and procedures for clearance of information to be released. All the staff, however, should participate in edu ating the community about the day care program. They may need some orientation to develop a sense of priority and protocol and the ability to communicate, as well as a clear understanding of day care itself.

Informing the public about day care should be more than a readiness to speak at meetings or respond to specific questions. It involves specific planning for building a positive image about day care in the eyes of the public--generally as well as selected, special publics such as tradespeople, industry, and neighbors of the center. A publicly supported day care program operated by the public school system should be alert to public events and sensitive to any potential for day care programs in appropriate situations.

Day care uses community resources

The day care program in a school system must be aware of all available community services appropriate to its needs.

The use of the community resources will fall into three general categories:

1. agencies and services providing for specialized help: public, voluntary, and specially skilled and available individuals

2. resources for the children's activities and learning

   -the community itself

   -civic information and participation

   -community workers

   -geography and geo-politics

   -social institutions

   -exposure to social pluralism beyond the scope of the day care center itself

3. resources for parents, to become acquainted with the community's available services and program for

   -personal and family enrichment

   -specific referrals

In addition to using community resources, day care itself is a community resource. Not only does it serve the needs of families and children, but it can also make itself available for observation and participation by volunteers and students in a broad range of human services. The volunteers can range from the young Girl Scouts, Brownies, and 4-H members to grandparents and able-bodied residents of old age homes. The students can gain a wealth of experience relevant to work in the fields of child development, home economics, medicine, nursing, social welfare, and nutrition. Serving as a resource not only enriches the program for children, but provides valuable practicum for participants.

Coordination with other agencies

Coordination of activities and cooperation of all existing agencies is currently the key word. On the State level, many communities are expressing interest in the Redesign program; on the national level, similar interest is being shown in the 4 C's concept (Community Coordinated Child Care) and more recently in the Advocacy program. All have some things in common:

-There is little money to support these projects.

-Each is a conceptual framework for "putting it all together" --the people, the agencies, the services and the available spaces.

-Each supports the idea that communities need to be autonomous in developing programs, using State and national consultants only to help them to do better what they decide they want to do.

-Each establishes a committee representative of all peoples in the community -- local government, churches, schools, agencies, industry, professionals, rich, poor, young, old, etc.; the committee member carries responsibility for representing his constituents and keeping them informed about progress.

-Each suggests that the time has passed for competing and is now ripe for coordinating all efforts in order to provide quality services to the total community most economically in terms of existing people and institutions.

-Each suggests that a community which speaks with a unified voice for the needs of its children and families will be able to meet those needs better than any one agency.

Obviously, it is much easier to write about such coordination than to produce it. Agencies, including schools, have a long history of American apple-pie, rugged individualism in their blood streams. It will not be easy to find the illusive, happy medium between preserving the knowledge professionals bring to their disciplines and letting the total community get involved. The school was the heart of the community. Like a chameleon, it changed its appearance to become a courthouse, a town hall, a church, a dancehall as people met there to administer justice, to participate in town government, to pray, and to play. There was no need to prescribe community involvement by law or by decree. People were completely immersed in everything in the total community.

As school districts grew in size and complexity, as we began to specialize, overspecialize and to fragment, the school board took over more and more decision making without keeping the community informed. They began to adopt Madison Avenue techniques to sell a bond issue or pass the budget as though only the board members and the professionals cared about quality of schools. Some school people need to be reminded that schools belong to the community.

New emphasis on community and parent involvement is an attempt to restore the active concern of the total community without compromising the contributions of the professionals. In an attempt to restore the involvement and the excitement, many Federal and State programs are now mandating advisory or policy committees. This kind of involvement can become purely perfunctory -- a rubber stamping of plans made by the power structure if the concept is not fully understood and sensitively administered.

There are no easy answers, no blueprints; no one way to achieve the desired effect. There is only a commitment to the philosophical base which can open the door for broader community participation, recognizing the value of cross-fertilization of ideas in order to achieve what everyone wants -- quality of service. School people carry a grave responsibility to insure that the quality of "openness" to all ideas remains an option at all times.